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INTERVIEW OF  
KIKA DE LA GARZA

CONDUCTED BY  
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TAPE TRANSCRIPTION

## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. STANFORD: This is an oral history interview with former Congressman and Chairman of the House Agricultural Committee, Mr. Kika de la Garza, for the Special Collections of the National Agricultural Library. We're at Moore Air Base, near Mission, Texas. Moore Air Base served as the headquarters for the Screw Worm Eradication Program in the United States from 1962 until 1975.

Today is November 5, 2001. I am Paul T. (Tommy) Stanford. And Mr. de la Garza, thank you very much for being here with us today and participating.

First, tell us a little bit about your early experiences and background. What was your place and date of birth?

MR. DE LA GARZA: I was born in Mercedes, Texas, which is right near here, but grew up in Mission, Texas, where my parents lived. And that was my elementary through high school. From there, I went in the Navy towards the end of World War II, then came back to finish high school and what was then Edinburg Junior College and now is Pan American University -- University of Texas, Pan American.

And then from there, into the state legislature, six terms, twelve years, and from there, to Congress until I retired two sessions ago.

MR. STANFORD: Did your family background have any influence on your later decision to enter politics?

1 MR. DE LA GARZA: Oh, yes. All my family, my father's family,  
2 was involved in politics. My dad was, I guess in the big city of Coahama,  
3 ward heeler. He knew everyone in town and helped -- he never ran for  
4 office, himself, but he helped everyone.

5 So at a very early age, I was out putting up signs and working  
6 and this or that other campaign. My first political speech at 16 was Benson  
7 For Congress, never dreaming that one day, I'd have that seat, myself.

8 MR. STANFORD: Tell us a little bit more about your military  
9 career. Did that service impact on your later career?

10 MR. DE LA GARZA: Well, it did but it was very minimal  
11 because as soon as I went in the Navy, everyone quit. And the same way  
12 with Korea. I had taken ROTC at the University and got a commission, and  
13 I got called in during the Korean War and they quit. General Eisenhower  
14 came in and finished the war. We finished it together.

15 But in 1962 --yes, the two new kids on the block -- no, '52, the  
16 two new kids on the block were Eisenhower and me, when I ran for the  
17 legislature.

18 MR. STANFORD: Tell us a little bit more about your education  
19 after you went to school here in Edinburg. You went to St. Mary's  
20 University?

21 MR. DE LA GARZA: Yes, I went to St. Mary's University and  
22 then from there, St. Mary's University School of Law, where I finished. And

1 I finished and went right in the Army. But the legal part, no one in my family  
2 were lawyers. But I shined shoes when I was a young kid in Mission and I  
3 used to come and shine the shoes for someone they called Judge  
4 Strickland. And he was very kind to me and I would go in his office and  
5 shine his shoes. Paid well.

6 And so I went to school the early part with the nuns, Our lady  
7 Guadelupe, a parochial school. And one day, the nuns said, "What do you  
8 want to do when you grow up?" "Well, what is Judge Strickland?" "He's a  
9 judge. He's a lawyer." "That's what I want to be." That's how I got started.

10 MR. STANFORD: So he influenced your desire to go on and  
11 become an attorney?

12 MR. DE LA GARZA: Right.

13 MR. STANFORD: Study law? Tell us a little bit more about  
14 when you entered politics and your professional career in the Texas House  
15 of Representatives. What influenced you or made you decide to enter  
16 politics in that arena?

17 MR. DE LA GARZA: I had grown up around politics because of  
18 my dad and my uncles and they were all small-town type politicians. So  
19 that was part of that. And in school, I wasn't the norm where you run for  
20 class president and so on like most of them that later would wind up in  
21 politics. I never did that.

22 I belonged to the Dramatics Club and so on but I was good at

1 public speaking. And when I ran for the legislature, they opened up a new  
2 seat in this county. We had one representative and they opened up two  
3 and three. So I ran for place three against what was then known as the  
4 machine. And my father and his brothers, my grandfather, they were all  
5 part of the machine. I didn't even know if they were going to help me or  
6 not. But that's another story.

7 But we beat the machine and I was re-elected from 52 every  
8 two years until four years ago.

9 MR. STANFORD: And in, and when you were serving in the  
10 Texas House, what were some of your key goals and your key initiatives?

11 MR. DE LA GARZA: In the Texas House, it was, I really  
12 developed -- it helped me become a better Congressman later because you  
13 manage your own bill in the Texas House. You introduce a bill, you handle  
14 it in the committee, on the floor. It's your bill, which is not the same in  
15 Congress. It belongs to the committee and to the chairman of the  
16 committee.

17 But I was ready for that because I had basically grown. I was  
18 the youngest member of the legislature, of the House, when I went in, in  
19 1952. So that was a great experience for me. I, of course, was interested  
20 in everything in our area, farming, ranching, relations with Mexico, and  
21 international relations. I was very active in all of that.

22 And I handled legislation on water, a lot of water legislation and

1 farm legislation and things relating to commerce, agricultural commerce.

2 MR. STANFORD: And the Moore Field had been turned over  
3 to the Department of Agriculture while you were still in the Texas  
4 Legislature.

5 MR. DE LA GARZA: Yes.

6 MR. STANFORD: Is that correct?

7 MR. DE LA GARZA: Yes. I had worked here one summer, I  
8 worked in the resteraunt. But when it was turned over to the State of  
9 Texas, the Screw Worm Eradication Program was private sector and the  
10 state handled the Screw Worm Eradication Program.

11 And following two of my heros, Knipling and Bushland, that I  
12 always considered -- I used to send their names in for the Nobel Peace  
13 Prize. They never were considered for that but they did get the World Food  
14 Award, which I attended when they received it.

15 But they were two of my heros that got me started, not only in  
16 that but there was like 16 million cases of screw worms in Texas and they  
17 brought it down to zero with this program.

18 MR. STANFORD: When did you first become acquainted with  
19 Drs. Knipling and Bushland? How did you first meet them and become  
20 aware of the work they were doing?

21 MR. DE LA GARZA: Well, it was here. They came down here  
22 from Kerrville and, of course, if you were going to be involved in the screw

1 worm, you have to know who is doing the work and the scientific work and  
2 where it was coming from. And I met them here. They came down -- we  
3 had invited Vice President Lyndon Johnson to come down here and he  
4 came and Knipling and Bushland came, also. They were here when he  
5 visited.

6 And I don't remember if they were here when Secretary of  
7 Agriculture Orville Freeman came and the (inaudible), the Mexican Minister  
8 of Agriculture. I don't remember if Knipling and Bushland came, but it was  
9 before then that I became acquainted with their great work.

10 MR. STANFORD: And as you went on, moved on to the U.S.  
11 House of Representatives, what committees did you serve on during your  
12 tenure in the House in Washington?

13 MR. DE LA GARZA: All 32 years, I served on the Agriculture  
14 Committee. Half of that time was chairman of that committee. I served  
15 temporarily on the International Relations Committee and temporarily on  
16 the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. But mostly my major  
17 committee was always Committee on Agriculture.

18 MR. STANFORD: And during the 1960s, what were the biggest  
19 issues for Agriculture and how did those change over the period of time you  
20 served in Congress?

21 MR. DE LA GARZA: Well, it doesn't seem to change because  
22 we had a drought, and boy, did we have a drought. They had problems.

1 But my interest with this program was that the private sector, which the  
2 private sector and the State of Texas were paying for the Screw Worm  
3 Program, and the private sector wanted to ease off because of the drought  
4 and they had a lot of problems.

5 So they decided they would go to Washington and see what we  
6 could do there. By that time, I was in Washington as a brand new  
7 Congressman when they came to ask for funding for the Screw Worm  
8 Program or partly to join with the State of Texas.

9 And there's a little anecdote about that. The proverbial long-  
10 time agriculture Chairman Jamie Whitten, my dearly departed friend, who  
11 was Chairman of the Agriculture Subcommittee on Appropriations  
12 throughout his career. And we went before the committee and he had had  
13 a bad impression of the Hoof-and-Mouth Disease Program in Mexico and  
14 he kept telling them, "We spent a lot of money, killed a lot of cattle." And  
15 we couldn't make him understand that this was a different program. It had,  
16 it wasn't the Hoof and Mouth.

17 Finally, I had just about given up and he said, "Well, what else  
18 do you have to say, young man?" I said, "Well, my father works there." He  
19 said, "Oh, well, that's different."

20 MR. STANFORD: So your father was working here at the  
21 Screw Worm Plant?

22 MR. DE LA GARZA: Yeah, my dad was working here at a



1 warehouse.

2 MR. STANFORD: What, as a result of that, and the federal  
3 funding started for the program?

4 MR. DE LA GARZA: Yeah, it started with the sharing with the  
5 state and the private sector and then kind of by taking it all up because of  
6 our association then with Mexico and trying to go south, which eventually  
7 we did, through Mexico and some of the Central American countries.

8 MR. STANFORD: When you spoke of the private sector  
9 running the program initially along with the State of Texas, was that the  
10 Southwest Animal Health Research Foundation, or were there other  
11 groups?

12 MR. DE LA GARZA: Well, it was an independent group that  
13 eventually became the SWAHRF, Southwest Animal Health Research  
14 Foundation, and it's the one that basically took over on behalf of the State  
15 of the Texas and the other states, Louisiana, Oklahoma.

16 MR. STANFORD: Initially, it was more private individuals,  
17 though?

18 MR. DE LA GARZA: It was the cattlemen, Texas Cattlemen's  
19 Association.

20 MR. STANFORD: Oh, okay. Who else on the Agricultural  
21 Committee or who else in Congress, for that matter, was instrumental in  
22 getting funding initiated for the program? Was it basically the Ag

1 Committee and yourself?

2 MR. DE LA GARZA: Oh, the Ag Committee, me, basically, and  
3 Mr. Poll, W.R. Poll, a Congressman from Waco who was chairman of the  
4 committee. When I went on the committee, he wasn't chairman but when  
5 he became chairman, he was very knowledgeable about everything  
6 agriculture, but interested in the cattle.

7 And basically, it was a very difficult roll because very few  
8 people know or care what the Screw Worm Program was.

9 MR. STANFORD: So very few of your colleagues in Congress  
10 knew about it?

11 MR. DE LA GARZA: Right.

12 MR. STANFORD: Or recognized the importance of it. How big  
13 of an issue was this for the, I guess, the typical constituency here both in  
14 your district and in Texas?

15 MR. DE LA GARZA: Well, even then, we had problems  
16 although basically, we're an agriculture state. We have a lot of cattle. But  
17 it's not anything that will excite someone downtown, home town type, the  
18 Screw Worm Program. I wasn't, it didn't make headlines, although the work  
19 they did was tremendous.

20 And that's one of the reasons the first use of radiation for  
21 peace purposes in agriculture was done with the Screw Worm Eradication  
22 Program. And I thought it merited the Nobel Peace Prize. They never did it

1 for Knipling and Bushland but like I say, they did get the World Food Award.

2 MR. STANFORD: And was the public aware of that, the use of  
3 the irradiation, and was that a concern for people?

4 MR. DE LA GARZA: No, there were very few -- I hate to say it  
5 but several people that work here are in the immediate vicinity because of  
6 the jobs and so on. On the contrary, it was the beginning of trying to use  
7 the radiation for fruit and vegetables and this was very controversial and  
8 people marched against it.

9 It was very, very, very difficult because they and, they still,  
10 when you say we're going to irradiate food, will shy away.

11 MR. STANFORD: How significant was the screw worm  
12 production facility here at Moore Base in terms of an employer for your  
13 district? Did that have a significant effect?

14 MR. DE LA GARZA: Yes, it was one of the major employers in  
15 the area because we were basically agricultural, no major manufacturing.  
16 So we didn't have a Ford or GM plant or anything like that. It was basically  
17 an on-the-ground agriculture.

18 So besides the school districts, this plant here was a major  
19 employer.

20 MR. STANFORD: And was it ever difficult to justify this  
21 program to the voters of the area or were they just not knowledgeable, like  
22 you mentioned, as a whole?

1 MR. DE LA GARZA: Well, we never needed to justify it to the  
2 voters like a bond issue or anything like that, but the whole area, no jobs.  
3 So whatever the program was, it was making jobs. So they went along with  
4 it.

5 MR. STANFORD: What about when the production facility  
6 moved from here to Mexico, how was that? How did the constituency  
7 handle that and was that a difficult transition?

8 MR. DE LA GARZA: It was a very difficult transition for many  
9 reasons. We were losing jobs. Although it did give an opportunity to  
10 anyone that wanted to move with the program to Mexico, and many did.  
11 But it was difficult, nonetheless.

12 And what do we do with the facility here, afterwards? So we  
13 started other programs and we worked on that, but it was a very difficult  
14 transition. Like now, when you're shutting down manufacturing areas and  
15 when you're dismissing workers.

16 So many of them were able to continue on, because of the  
17 bilingual ability of basically everyone that worked here, it wasn't very  
18 difficult for them to move into Mexico and continue with the program in  
19 Mexico.

20 MR. STANFORD: Let's talk a little bit about the program  
21 getting established in Mexico even before the plant moved there. What was  
22 your involvement in that effort?

1                   MR. DE LA GARZA: Well, I was part of every group that went  
2 down and visiting. At that time, I had very good relations individually with  
3 the President of Mexico and the governors and members of their congress.  
4 So I was involved.

5                   Also, here, we had the federal union. In Mexico, it was a much  
6 more stronger union that was going to represent the workers there and so  
7 you have to be dealing with the Mexican government and the union,  
8 separate and apart, really. It was a very difficult time.

9                   MR. STANFORD: Who were some of the officials in Mexico?  
10 You mentioned the President and some of the officials there. What were  
11 some of their names, that you can remember?

12                   MR. DE LA GARZA: Well, the Minister of Agriculture at the  
13 time was Gil Paciago, and he had been governor of the State of Jalisco  
14 and, of course, President Diaz Ordoz, and those that followed him. And the  
15 governors of the northern states of Mexico, Tamaulipa, Nuevo Leone,  
16 Coahuila, they were all involved. And odd as it may seem, like the governor  
17 of Tamaulipas, they all had ranches and had cattle. So they were basically  
18 cattlemen, also. And that helped.

19                   MR. STANFORD: So they understood the importance of the  
20 program and the impact of it?

21                   MR. DE LA GARZA: Oh, yes, they knew how important it was  
22 and they helped. The only problem we had in that respect was there was

1 no money. They didn't have any money so whoever devised the in-kind  
2 situation, that was very helpful. We would enter into an agreement and  
3 they would provide in-kind, their part.

4 MR. STANFORD: How often did you, while the plant was still  
5 operational in Mission, did you have occasion to visit it very often and  
6 interact with the staff here?

7 MR. DE LA GARZA: Yes, because I knew basically all of the  
8 workers here and when I was in Congress, we were bringing members down  
9 to visit. And also, the leadership here in the plant was pretty active in the  
10 Chamber of Commerce and in the community. So it was a good project,  
11 good for the area and good for the reason that it was established. And we  
12 had a very, very good relationship with management and labor here.

13 Down here, you didn't differentiate between management and  
14 labor like you do up in the major unions and the other areas of the country.  
15 So down here, it was just one big, happy family.

16 MR. STANFORD: Back again to the establishment of the  
17 relationship with Mexico, as a member of the Agriculture and Foreign  
18 Affairs Committees, what role did you have and how did that -- I know you  
19 mentioned your relationship with the President and other members of the  
20 political parties in Mexico helping establish that Mexico/U.S. commission.  
21 Were there other types of work involved that you helped with?

22 MR. DE LA GARZA: Well, part of that was lobbying for the

1 program with members of the House of Foreign Affairs Committee, in the  
2 Senate, the Foreign Relations Committee. And I was the one that  
3 represented the area where the plant was so I'm the one that did a lot of the  
4 yeoman work in that respect, besides the people that went up from here.

5 MR. STANFORD: And were there other members of Congress  
6 that were supportive once they understood the situation and the program?

7 MR. DE LA GARZA: Not that many, not that many. Actually, if  
8 you got the Chairman of the Subcommittee, Mr. Whitten, he would put the  
9 money in. The question was how much? And there was one of those -- in  
10 those days, when the chairman brought something to the floor, that was it.  
11 This was before the new member revolutions of later years.

12 MR. STANFORD: What about the individuals from Mexico that  
13 were involved? How much influence did they have with the U.S. in getting a  
14 program started there?

15 MR. DE LA GARZA: They were very interested but, again, the  
16 difference between the systems -- our representative in Mexico, deputalas  
17 [?], you call them, didn't have the input that we had on our side. Because,  
18 in Mexico, it's changed now, but not entirely. It was the President and the  
19 governor and basically, that was it. The Minister of Agriculture, under the  
20 guidance of the President.

21 So individual members of the Congress rarely were involved,  
22 except those from the border that knew of the, what we had here. But it

1 was a very different situation. It was top heavy. You would have to deal  
2 with the upper echelons and not go convince the members of the House or  
3 the members of the committees.

4 MR. STANFORD: But you were fortunate to already have  
5 some relationships there?

6 MR. DE LA GARZA: I was very fortunate, very lucky that we  
7 had this association prior to it.

8 MR. STANFORD: And when the eradication, the joint  
9 commission between Mexico and the U.S., was ultimately established, were  
10 you present when that occurred and how involved were you in the language  
11 that established that commission or the documentation?

12 MR. DE LA GARZA: I can't say that I was directly involved in  
13 the language, per se, I don't know, but maybe I was on the fringes. But I  
14 was involved in all the relations because, like I say, it was done government  
15 to government and you dealt with only a few people in Mexico.

16 MR. STANFORD: And when the agreement between the two  
17 countries was signed, that was in Mexico City, if I'm not mistaken?

18 MR. DE LA GARZA: Right, right.

19 MR. STANFORD: In 1972.

20 MR. DE LA GARZA: Right.

21 MR. STANFORD: And you went to that signing?

22 MR. DE LA GARZA: Yes.



1 MR. STANFORD: Who else was there from the United States  
2 to sign that, that you remember?

3 MR. DE LA GARZA: I don't really recall but I think that Wayne  
4 Hayes, from Ohio, of all places, was the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee  
5 Chairman and anything that went on in a foreign country, he was basically  
6 involved. So I remember Wayne Hayes. I can't recall who else went.

7 I think Congressman Lujan [Manuel Lujan, Jr.] from New  
8 Mexico might have been there. He was on several trips but I'm not very  
9 sure.

10 MR. STANFORD: And the Secretary of Agriculture, of course?

11 MR. DE LA GARZA: The Secretary of Agriculture, yes.

12 MR. STANFORD: And that was Earl Butts, at the time?

13 MR. DE LA GARZA: At the time. When we first started, it was  
14 Orville Freeman, and I went a couple of times to Mexico with Orville  
15 Freeman. One time, by the request of President Johnson, but that wasn't  
16 on this program. That was on problems with cotton.

17 MR. STANFORD: Okay, the screw worm programs which  
18 began in the 1950s in Florida and now have continued for more than five  
19 decades have led to the successful eradication in North and Central  
20 America. One question we have is, how was the funding maintained over  
21 such a long period of time for a program which was not generally very  
22 popular or very not widely known, I guess, to start with?

1 MR. DE LA GARZA: One of the main reasons was that when  
2 we first convinced Chairman Jamie Whitten and he put it as part of the  
3 legislation, it's one of those things that happen in Congress that gets lost.  
4 And when you start writing a new bill every session or basically every year,  
5 unless there's something coming up positive and/or negative, it just stays  
6 in there.

7 So all I had to do was, one, to get my colleagues from the  
8 Texas delegation to give me support and keep quiet. Don't ruffle the  
9 feathers.

10 MR. STANFORD: Was the support from President Johnson  
11 instrumental? Was that a factor?

12 MR. DE LA GARZA: That was a major factor. That was very,  
13 very instrumental and it came at the right time because President Kennedy  
14 would have never understood the program, except for the foreign part of it,  
15 when he wanted the alliance for progress and so on. But President  
16 Johnson, being partly a cattleman, himself -- not a cattleman as such but he  
17 had cattle -- so that was very helpful.

18 MR. STANFORD: And what about the private sector, we spoke  
19 of SWAHRF earlier, and other organizations like the Texas Cattlemen's  
20 Association, did they stay active in lobbying for continued funding through  
21 the years?

22 MR. DE LA GARZA: To this day, they've stayed active,

1 SWAHRF, more importantly. And there was a fledgling, well, it was a Texas  
2 and Southwest Cattlemen's Association. But there was a small Texas part  
3 and they all supported it. And this was very unusual because they were  
4 putting the money up front. You signed up and you had to pay so much per  
5 cow, per herd.

6 MR. STANFORD: And what, do you think it was because they  
7 understood the significance?

8 MR. DE LA GARZA: Oh, the understood. And they had seen  
9 the success. Seeing a deer out in the field or a calf or a cow infected with  
10 screw worm, that would send shocks through your system. And knowing  
11 that could not only diminish your herd or your cattle, but it could turn people  
12 off from eating beef. So it's very difficult for someone not a cattleman  
13 seeing an infected animal and then going and eating a big chunk of beef.

14 MR. STANFORD: Was the public health issue ever an issue  
15 here in the United States? I know that the screw worm does infect humans  
16 as well as other animals.

17 MR. DE LA GARZA: No, it didn't become a public health issue  
18 although for support, we always insisted that it could affect humans and  
19 now and then you would find a case here or there. But it was not a major  
20 public health issue.

21 MR. STANFORD: How did the funding for this program  
22 compare to the total funding of agricultural programs while you were in

1 Congress? Was this considered a relatively small program?

2 MR. DE LA GARZA: Oh, yes, it was very small. The major  
3 expenditures in agricultural -- let me back up. Agricultural is a very  
4 minuscule part of the overall budget, to begin with. I had a famous chart  
5 that I showed on it but the fact is that the screw worm program was a very,  
6 very small part of the overall agricultural budget as compared to the support  
7 programs for cotton or grains.

8 MR. STANFORD: Do you think that the screw worm program  
9 influenced other pest control programs or influenced Congress to support  
10 other pest control programs in later years, such as the Mediterranean Fruit  
11 Fly Program and other control programs?

12 MR. DE LA GARZA: Yes, because of -- well, we're dealing with  
13 the same people. There was still Jamie Whitten, and the Mediterranean  
14 Fruit Fly and the Mexican Fruit Fly. One day, I got so frustrated and I said,  
15 "Why don't we have a genuine American fly of some kind? They're all  
16 foreign."

17 But it was the same people that were dealing with it in the  
18 Congress.

19 MR. STANFORD: So that was helpful, I suppose?

20 MR. DE LA GARZA: It was very helpful, yes.

21 MR. STANFORD: What's your overall view of the screw worm  
22 program from the viewpoint of being the Chairman of the Agriculture

1 Committee in relation to just the big picture, I guess you could say?

2 MR. DE LA GARZA: Well, it has many sides to it but the major  
3 factor was in dealing with the average member of Congress that didn't  
4 really know the program or wasn't that much interested. But the fact was  
5 that I could view this as the program that -- whose aim was to get rid of the  
6 program and that we were cutting down and cutting down and say how  
7 successful we have been with the program.

8 For other areas, I would use this as an example. We're not out  
9 to get taxpayers' dollars for any one reason or another. We have a problem  
10 that needs to be taken care of and the sooner the program is fixed, we're  
11 not going to come and ask for more money, which is rare in the Congress  
12 because people would say, "We'll never ask for anymore," and next year,  
13 they will be, "Well, we didn't really mean that."

14 MR. STANFORD: I know that while you were the Chair of the  
15 Agriculture Committee at the U.S. Congress, there was an outbreak of the  
16 New World Screw Worm in North Africa, in Libya. Tell us about how the  
17 U.S. got involved in that eradication effort and, particularly, what your  
18 involvement was.

19 MR. DE LA GARZA: My end of it, of course, there was the  
20 FAO, really, that came up with the information that they had found screw  
21 worms in Libya and they came and wanted for us to get involved. We had  
22 no diplomatic relations with Libya. Mexico had. We were, unfortunately,

1 behind. We may still be behind in our contributions to the United Nations.  
2 The United Nations was one of the more popular programs in the Congress.

3 So what happened then was that Mexico, working through the  
4 FAO, worked out a deal where we sold basically the fly or the pupae to  
5 Libya, or Mexico did. And they started the process, Mexico, the FAO, went  
6 into Libya. And it was done very, very quickly and really, they were able to  
7 take care of it.

8 Because I could see if this thing gets into the Sahara and  
9 across the Sahara, there goes all of Africa with the screw worm. And it  
10 would be like the tsetse fly, that was so very dangerous and devastating in  
11 many parts of Africa. So this was something that I was very interested in.

12 Whatever part I played, the previous ambassador to the United  
13 Nations came to thank me and invited me to come to Libya to see Mr.  
14 Khadafi. I didn't want to touch that one.

15 MR. STANFORD: That was the ambassador from Libya to the  
16 United Nations?

17 MR. DE LA GARZA: Yes.

18 (Interruption to tape.)

19 MR. STANFORD: That effort to eradicate Libya through the  
20 United Nations, FAO, did that require Congressional support and  
21 Presidential support?

22 MR. DE LA GARZA: No, because we were dealing with Mexico

1 and Mexico was dealing with them, not us.

2 MR. STANFORD: Oh, okay.

3 MR. DE LA GARZA: So the only thing that we needed, I  
4 needed to pass a bill was that you could sell screw worm flies or pupae,  
5 that you could sell them. So we passed a little bill allowing SWAHRF and  
6 Mexico to sell flies.

7 MR. STANFORD: You mentioned that SWAHRF and Mexico  
8 were selling flies to the United Nations. SWAHRF was still involved? And  
9 how were they still involved in this?

10 MR. DE LA GARZA: Well, no, it was basically Mexico but  
11 SWAHRF, because we have the commission with Mexico, so SWAHRF was  
12 collaterally involved, I would say, not directly involved.

13 MR. STANFORD: Oh, okay.

14 MR. DE LA GARZA: The flies didn't belong to SWAHRF.

15 MR. STANFORD: They belonged to the joint commission?

16 MR. DE LA GARZA: Yes.

17 MR. STANFORD: And Mexico took the lead in selling of those  
18 flies to the United Nations?

19 MR. DE LA GARZA: Right.

20 MR. STANFORD: During the course of the program, I know we  
21 spoke about your visiting the production facility here in Mission on a  
22 number of occasions. Did you also get the opportunity to visit the one in

1 Mexico?

2 MR. DE LA GARZA: Yes, several times.

3 MR. STANFORD: And how would you compare the two  
4 operations? Were they, I know the one in Mexico is on a larger scale but in  
5 general terms, what were your impressions?

6 MR. DE LA GARZA: Well, basically, it was the same system  
7 but it was somewhat different. Like I say, again, the unions in Mexico and  
8 their relationship with the program and the area in which the plant was in  
9 Mexico, but it was basically the same program because many of the major  
10 participants had come from here to Mexico.

11 MR. STANFORD: And after the program successfully  
12 eradicated Mexico and moved on through Central America, were you  
13 involved in some of the efforts in some of the other countries there, and to  
14 what degree, if you were?

15 MR. DE LA GARZA: Well, yes, I was involved in visiting in  
16 Washington with the embassies and with some of the people from the other  
17 countries. I remember very particularly, Nicaragua, for example, the  
18 chairman of one of my -- the Merchant Marine Committee had been to West  
19 Point with the son of President Somoza, who later became president. And I  
20 was able to meet him through this other member in Congress and visit with  
21 him.

22 So I explained to him how important it was to continue going



1 south. And they, for right or for wrong, I don't know that, but they were also  
2 cattlemen. They were involved with cattle in Nicaragua and Guatemala.  
3 We had relations with the sugar-producing -- because we bought sugar.  
4 We had a quota for sugar for some of the Central and South American  
5 nations.

6 So I and the chairman of the committee at one time, we set the  
7 quota in the committee. So we were able to use that as leverage to work  
8 with the screw worm program and the Mediterranean Fruit Fly, the Mexican  
9 Fruit Fly.

10 MR. STANFORD: What do you see now that the program has  
11 eradicated as far as the Panama Canal, now. They have declared that far  
12 has been screw worm-free. What do you see is the general impact on  
13 North and Central America of that eradication?

14 MR. DE LA GARZA: It's very difficult to say because most of  
15 the Central and South American countries are not, with the exception of  
16 Argentina, for example, or Chile, they're not meat eaters like we are in the  
17 United States. So that the production of cattle is important but not a major  
18 production for the economy in those countries, although like in Argentina, I  
19 might mention if I deviate.

20 I was in Argentina and we were invited to one of the ranches  
21 and invited to dinner. And so they had turkey and dressing for us. So I told  
22 the host, I said, "Hey, we thought you were going to serve us this giant, big

1       steak." He said, "No, everybody eats steak here. Even the dogs eat steak.  
2       We wanted something special for our guests." So they gave us turkey.

3               MR. STANFORD: What do you see as the outlook for the  
4       future? I know that Venezuela has expressed some interest in starting a  
5       control program in that country and purchasing flies from the production  
6       facility in Mexico. What are your thoughts on that? Do you think the  
7       program has potential to progress further?

8               MR. DE LA GARZA: Yes, it has, but it is a different situation,  
9       altogether. Because basically, these countries have jungles which we didn't  
10      have here when we started through the Southwest. And basically, we had  
11      the mountains in Mexico. But, well, you have a vast jungle in Brazil,  
12      Venezuela, and some of the other South American countries, and it's much  
13      more difficult.

14              But it's still the same problem and if we could continue the  
15      program -- whether you could eventually declare Brazil or Venezuela  
16      completely eradicated, I don't know if you can do it because there's vast  
17      amounts of jungle. But it's worth a try and the costs in relation to the cost  
18      of losses would be minimal.

19              MR. STANFORD: The pay back would be a lot larger.

20              MR. DE LA GARZA: The pay back would be a lot larger.

21              MR. STANFORD: We just learned last week that they have  
22      had a small outbreak of screw worm in Chiapas, near where the sterile

1 production plant is located. And since the eradication in the United States  
2 and other Central American countries, there have been occasional  
3 outbreaks. Do you have any thoughts on those situations? Is it important  
4 that the U.S. maintain an awareness and a presence in the program?

5 MR. DE LA GARZA: Oh, yes, yes. I have always maintained  
6 that we needed to have a barrier between the U.S. and Mexico but that  
7 wasn't feasible so that you would then do it in Mexico, with Guatemala and  
8 Belize. And there's always been the talk of plants on a ship. As a matter of  
9 fact, that was one of the issues, one of the ways that it was considered  
10 going further south, to have a ship off of the coast of some of the countries.

11 But I think that there has to be continued surveillance.  
12 Because there was, sometime back, there was some flies that have gotten  
13 across into Mexico, some cattle that were brought across from Guatemala.  
14 And we have the capacity to -- this plant here in mothballs, I mean, we  
15 could make it go real quick if you need to. But the cost would be much  
16 more less if you maintain surveillance.

17 MR. STANFORD: What other -- is there anything else about  
18 the program in particular or about the issues we've talked about here that  
19 you would like to add to what we've already discussed?

20 MR. DE LA GARZA: Well, it's just a program that I'm very  
21 proud of and proud to have been on the fringes in helping out. To me, it  
22 was important that my father worked here. My father had retired but then

1 he came on his own and got a job here after he was 70.

2 When we passed the law that you couldn't work if you were  
3 over 72 or whatever it was, I spoke with Secretary Freeman, I said, "If he's  
4 not doing the job, don't feel you have to keep him." He said, "No, we want  
5 him there. We'll keep him there." To me, that's important that the program  
6 has been successful, that my part was as minimal as it may have been, and  
7 then my father had worked here.

8 Very enjoyable work because it wasn't heavy work but all his  
9 friends here were very young. So we think that prolonged his life for many  
10 years because he was dealing with much, much younger people and having  
11 a good time at it.

12 MR. STANFORD: How long did he work here at the facility?

13 MR. DE LA GARZA: I think he worked here like about twenty  
14 years. He worked until he was 82. And then he quit. They didn't fire him.

15 MR. STANFORD: So he quit before they closed this facility  
16 and they moved it to Mexico?

17 MR. DE LA GARZA: Yes. But to this day, I run across people  
18 my age or younger that say, "We worked with your dad in Moore Field and  
19 enjoyed working with him," and he with them.

20 MR. STANFORD: What about during the program, both here in  
21 the United States and throughout Mexico and Central America, did you  
22 have much contact with the farmers and ranchers that benefited from the

1       program?

2                   MR. DE LA GARZA: Oh, yes, if you just went to the downtown  
3       restaurants, you would run into someone that had benefited, including what  
4       was not mentioned very, very often, but the Navajos in Arizona have cattle  
5       and they, the Navajo group to came to visit the plant here. I met with them  
6       here. Because it was very important to the New Mexico and Arizona Indian  
7       tribes.

8                   So I had relations with everyone and you didn't have to go very  
9       far to find someone who had benefited from the program.

10                  MR. STANFORD: And they were always very positive about it,  
11       I'm sure?

12                  MR. DE LA GARZA: All very positive, all very happy. And it  
13       was different from the Hoof-and-Mouth that you didn't have to sacrifice the  
14       animal. See, like the Hoof-and-Mouth, we killed every cow in Mexico. That  
15       was what Jamie Whitten was complaining about back then, confusing it with  
16       this program. But you didn't have to sacrifice animals.

17                  MR. STANFORD: And I've heard it stated by people, too, that  
18       it's also had an impact on the wildlife and that now the hunting industry or  
19       the -- is a big industry in Texas?

20                  MR. DE LA GARZA: It's the same because of the so-called 16  
21       million cases, a major part of that was wildlife, deer. The proliferation of  
22       the deer herds was tremendous once you got rid of the screw worm. So it

1       helped wildlife, it helped sportsmen and those that hunt. It was very, very  
2       helpful.

3                   MR. STANFORD: Do you think it would be difficult to maintain  
4       an awareness and a vigilance to keep the screw worm eradicated since  
5       time has passed? It's been so many years since there's been a major  
6       problem in the United States or Mexico?

7                   MR. DE LA GARZA: It would be much more difficult, not  
8       impossible. But unless you have an immediate official problem, it's very  
9       difficult. Well, I don't know now, since September 11<sup>th</sup>, if things have  
10      changed somewhat. I don't know that you really have to see the damage  
11      done from pests like the screw worm fly because you saw the Twin Towers.  
12      And that relates back.

13                  So I don't think it would be as difficult now but it would still,  
14      nonetheless, be difficult. But I would also add that surveillance, not  
15      necessarily here but Africa, would be very important, working with the FAO  
16      to keep surveillance in Africa. And a lot of the other countries, but you can  
17      see what happened with the Mad Cow Disease in Britain. And theirs was  
18      also sheep, mostly, and cattle that you have to sacrifice the animal. It's a  
19      major loss.

20                  I had always insisted that we continue working and ask the  
21      European Commission to work with us but we never could get them  
22      interested because it was not a major area like ours of range cattle or cattle

1 out in the ranches but rather in the Netherlands or the milk producing.

2 But I think that it is a world menace that could spring up at any  
3 time and we should continue being cautious about it.

4 MR. STANFORD: I guess for the United States, the ports of  
5 entry are the most important areas to maintain that vigilance?

6 MR. DE LA GARZA: Right. Like now, and they're checking  
7 everyone coming in for the other reasons of September 11th, the same has  
8 to do with animals. And APHIS is much more diligent, should be more  
9 diligent.

10 And we have like up in the mid-river areas like Del Rio and that  
11 area, Mexico bought sheep from our side and Mexico was very, very strict.  
12 Any time I would get a call from Del Rio or that area, it was, "Oh, what have  
13 they done now?" And they're just trying to keep out animals, not the meat,  
14 but the sheep. Mainly sheep. Not as much cows.

15 MR. STANFORD: Because of the pests?

16 MR. DE LA GARZA: Because of the pests. And the program  
17 that I couldn't think of was SCRAPES (phonetic). They had a run with  
18 quarantining and working with the SCRAPES program here at Moore Base  
19 but it didn't stay very long.

20 (The interview was concluded.)

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